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E would say two or three words to-day on a matter which greatly concerns art and artists, though in so doing, we risk the possibility of being pronounced in error, and upbraided for too hastily giving currency to wrong information. We would gladly find this to be the case,—our readers would be forced to admit it is seldom we do so,—and in that event we should solace ourselves with the saying of Burke, it is "better to be despised for too anxious apprehension than ruined by too confident security." We speak, however, on good grounds, and with the conviction that the step to which we are about most loudly to object, is contemplated if not determined on.

According to our information, which comes from more sources than one, the present esteemed and accomplished Secretary to the Royal Commissioners of Fine Arts proposes to retire from that position; its duties interfere with his work as a painter, to which, so it is said, Mr. Eastlake desires to devote more time. Glad are we to hear it; for well as he performs his duty as secretary, and useful as he has been, and would be to his country in that capacity, it is far easier to supply efficiently the place of the present secretary to the commission than of the painter of "Christ Lamenting over Jerusalem." This occurred to us forcibly the other morning, when looking at this picture in Mr. Vernon's gallery (that noblest evidence of the progress of the British School of Art, and of individual taste and munificence),* and we were, therefore, glad to hear of his intention. Not so, however, with the rest of the story, which runs thus, that Signor Bezzi, an Italian gentleman, is for a time to act as his deputy, and ultimately to be his successor!! We know we are upon ticklish ground: we *may* by possibility be annoying unnecessarily an individual for whom we have every respect,—at all events it may be *said* so, hereafter, if the intention be given up; but we feel the matter so strongly, view it so seriously, that we cannot, by waiting for further confirmation of the statement, run the risk of hearing that the appointment is settled, and that the objection should have been raised before.

The gentleman in question may or may not be perfectly fitted for the duty; with this we will have nothing to do, farther than this, that there are plenty of English artists or art-lovers quite as well fitted for it (far better for anything we know); and this being the case we most earnestly and loudly protest against the appointment of a foreigner to this office.

If we only remembered what Mr. Eastlake has written we should not believe that he could be any party to the arrangement. In a paper appended to one of the Reports of the Commissioners, we find him saying:—"The first conviction that should press upon us should be, that *our own country and our own English feelings are sufficient to produce and foster a characteristic style of art*; that although we might share much of the spirit of the Germanic nations, this spirit would be modified, perhaps refined, by our peculiar habits; above all we should entirely agree with the Germans in concluding that we are *as little in want of foreign artists* to represent our history and express our feelings as of foreign soldiers to defend our liberties. Even the question of ability (although that ability is not doubted), is unimportant; for *to trust to our own resources should be under any circumstances the only course.* Ability, if wanting, would of necessity follow. In the arts, as in arms, discipline, practice, and opportunity are necessary to the acquisition of skill and confidence; in both a beginning is to be made, and want of experience may occasion failure at first, but nothing could lead to failure in both more effectually than *the absence of sympathy and moral support* on the part of the country. Other nations, it may be observed, think their artists, whatever may be their real claims, the first in the world; and this partiality is unquestionably one of the chief causes of whatever excellence they attain. It is sometimes mortifying to observe that foreigners are *more just to English artists than the English themselves are.* Many of our artists who have settled or occasionally painted in Italy, Germany, Russia, and even in France, have been highly esteemed and employed. The Germans, especially, are great admirers of English art, and a picture by Wilkie has long graced the Gallery of Munich."

If this be true in respect of art, how much more so is it as relates to the literature of art, to general knowledge, judgment, good sense, and the other matters in question in the present appointment? "Our own country and our own English feelings are, surely, sufficient to produce and foster" a man fitted to be the secretary of a commission issued to advance British art and artists: we are "as little in want of a foreigner for such a post" as of foreign soldiers; "to trust to our own resources *should* be, under any circumstance, the only course," and such an appointment as is here deprecated would truly shew "the absence of all sympathy and moral support" on the part of those in authority.

The position which this appointment gives, and the remuneration it brings, should be made the reward to one of our countrymen who, in connection with the arts, may have exerted himself and deserved better than he may have received. There are too few of such rewards open in England, and to misapply these is indeed too bad.

So far from any being found to say that it is necessary to go out of England to obtain a proper man for the office, we unhesitatingly assert it is *in* England the best and most proper person will be found. Were this not the case, our protest would be weaker. We deny anything like a want of liberality in our feelings in this respect. We would offer no hindrance to the settlement of foreigners amongst us, or to their liberal employment. If they are superior to us, they will in time teach us to beat them, as Czar Peter used to say after losing in another sort of fight. If a German decorator, for example, is employed privately by half the aristocracy of England, we have no business, even if we had inclination, to interfere; but when a corporate or other public body apply to him exclusively, English artists have a right to demur to such a course,—the inference from which is that they are inferior to the foreigner,—if it be shewn that this is not so, and that they are fully equal to the undertaking. If a private gentleman thinks proper to employ a French architect, the public have no right to interfere, or to ask if many English architects would not do it as well or better; but if the Government were to employ this foreigner to erect a palace with the money of the people, and were unable to shew that the country did not possess a man equal to the occasion, they would commit a great wrong, and be amenable to public indignation.

Again, if there were no Englishman capable of producing a good collection of designs for decoration and manufactures, required for the School of Design, and to be chiefly paid for out of the national purse, we should have less ground for condemning the selection of a foreigner for that work, and for marking so strongly as we did the worthlessness of the first part of the work in question. Our opinion was adopted and confirmed in numerous quarters, and a mark was put upon that transaction which it will be difficult to remove. Nevertheless, the Court newsman shortly afterwards duly chronicled that the author of it was admitted to an audience of her Majesty, to present the precious publication, and receive praises which, by good management, are made to go from one end of the kingdom to the other, to shew how inferior we English are in matters of fine art.

An Englishman who may have published works really good and really useful, honourable to his country, and consulted abroad, but who did not know the way up back stairs, would find it difficult to get into the presence of his Sovereign, though he needed a cart to carry his productions.

The advancement of British art and skill, and the encouragement of British artists, is with us a matter of paramount interest, and we earnestly solicit for the latter "that sympathy and moral support on the part of the country" which is so necessary for complete success. In the case immediately before us, we enter a respectful protest against the appointment of a foreigner as secretary to the Royal Commission for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts, and sincerely hope that the intention so to act, if it exist, as we fully believe it does, may be at once and for ever abandoned.

* This fine collection is now open to the public every Tuesday and Thursday by tickets, which are obtainable in the hall of the National Gallery on any of the first four days of the week. Besides being issued in the *Arts' Journal*, engravings of the pictures forming the collection are to be published by the proprietors of that work on large paper, with descriptive letter-press, as a separate work, under the title of "The Vernon Gallery."

REMARKS ON PROFESSOR DONALDSON'S "ARCHITECTURAL MAXIMS AND THEOREMS."*

A WORK from the pen of Professor Donaldson must always be received with respect; and more particularly will his character and position secure for him every deference from the youthful learner. I have the advantage, therefore, of feeling that my present subject to my present audience is of more than ordinary interest; and this especially, as I may own at the commencement of my critisism, that I have very much to dwell upon with pleasure in the "Maxims and Theorems," and very little to dispute.

When Mr. Donaldson determined "to write in aphorisms," perhaps he took duly into account,—perhaps he did not,—that although such "has many excellent virtues whereto the writing in method does not approach," yet it carries with it also in most cases this disadvantage to an author, that the result of his labour has but small show. But he who has concluded that there is but little profit to be had in Mr. Donaldson's work, because it may have but small show, must have so concluded on a superficial examination of it. A good aphorism

* Read at a meeting of the Architectural Association, on Friday, the 26th ult. This society, we are glad to hear, is steadily on the increase.

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